

No. 286.—Petition of JAMES ROBERTSON and Others.

THE petitioners state that they are perpetual leaseholders in the Windonside portion of the education reserves of Otago and Southland; that when they took up the land it was understood that the Riversdale and Waikaia Railway would be constructed; that only a portion of it was formed; that an Act of Parliament of a retrospective character was passed into law making the settlers liable for a special rate for a private railway, which means an increase of 3d. or 4d. per acre; that they have no outlet for their produce, and are unable to continue a profitable occupation at the present high rate of rental. They ask to have the rents reduced or other relief.

I have the honour to report as follows: That the petition be referred to the Government for consideration.

21st July, 1886.

No. 375.—Petition of DAVID SMART and Others (New Zealand Land League Petition).

THE petitioners state that the existence of large landed estates in the immediate vicinity of towns and railway-line centres has been inimical to close and productive settlement, and the Crown lands not alienated are mostly unsuitable for prosperous agricultural settlement. They pray that a measure may be passed by the Legislature for purchasing a sufficiency of land on equitable terms to meet the demand for settlement; and pending the passing of such Act the Hon. the Minister of Lands be requested to take steps to purchase a thousand acres from one of the large-estate owners near Oamaru under the 168th clause of "The Land Act, 1885," and that such land may be subdivided into sections from five to fifty acres, and leased to applicants on terms specified in the Act.

I have the honour to report as follows: That the Committee recommend the object desired by the petitioners to the favourable consideration of the Government, and also desire to express the opinion that in cases such as these the Government should, on the recommendation of the Waste Lands Board, take steps to obtain land for settlement in accordance with the existing law.

23rd July, 1886.

THE NELSON CROWN TENANTS RELIEF BILL.

THE Waste Lands Committee, to whom this Bill was referred, have the honour to report that, after careful consideration, they are of opinion that no sufficient cause has been shown for the introduction of this Bill.

23rd July, 1886.

Nos. 169, 216, 245, 246, 303, 317, and 332.—Petition of J. H. TAYLOR and Others, JAMES KEIR and Others, R. P. SHARP and Others, N. O'TOOLE and Others, JAMES BROWN and Others, J. HOOD and Others, and T. MOSES and Others.

THE petitioners state that they are settlers and colonists in the Provincial District of Canterbury. They state that they are anxious and willing to take up lands and make homes for themselves and their families in the Provincial District of Canterbury, but are unable to do so on account (*inter alia*) of the upset price of £2 per acre being prohibitive, and the maximum area of each individual holding (320 acres) being prohibitive in respect of the land now open for selection. They pray the House to take the premises into favourable consideration.

I have the honour to report as follows: That the Committee, being of opinion that this is a matter simply of administration, refer these petitions to the Government.

25th July, 1886.

No. 353.—Petition of ROBERT S. GALBRAITH and Others.

THE petitioners state that they are leaseholders under "The Land Act 1877 Amendment Act, 1882," at Rangiuru, County of Tauranga; that the grass on their land has been entirely destroyed and their property greatly injured by volcanic dust from the late eruptions, and, in consequence, they have had to sell their cattle at a great sacrifice. The petitioners pray (as compensation for their losses) to obtain either the freehold of their said leasehold estate without further payment, or the remission and abatement for six years from the 10th June, 1886 (the date of the eruptions) of all rent or other payments due under the said Act, or such other relief as to the House shall seem meet.

I have the honour to report as follows: That the petition be referred to the Government for consideration.

27th July, 1886.

No. 413.—Petition of W. G. GARRARD (No 2).

THE petitioner prays to know why he has no claim for a grant of land for naval services.

I have the honour to report as follows: That the Committee reaffirm their former report of the 1st July instant.

27th July, 1886.

No. 75.—Petition of WILLIAM BENNETT and Others.

THE petitioners allege that they took up lands under the pastoral deferred-payment system; they state that that system is unsuitable to them, and that the price put upon the land was too high, in consequence of which, and of the heavy fall in price of produce, they see no escape from ruin. They ask that the pastoral deferred-payment holdings may be commuted into small runs, as provided for in "The Land Act, 1885."

I have the honour to report as follows: Having carefully considered the subject of this petition, and taken evidence thereon, the Committee are of opinion that it would be injudicious and impolitic